Diabetic Foot Screening

Is my child at risk for foot problems?

Yes, all people with diabetes are at risk. However, children have good circulation and normal feeling in their feet. Healthy foot-care habits can prevent future foot problems.

What do I need to know about foot problems and diabetes?

- Good blood sugar control can prevent skin infections of the feet.
- It is important to check your child’s feet and toenails every day.
- Proper fitting footwear can prevent foot problems.
- Good foot care can prevent foot problems such as blisters, infections, calluses and corns.
- Detect foot problems early and follow up with your health care provider.

What can I do to keep my child’s feet healthy?

- **Cut toenails** to prevent ingrown toenails.
  - Cut nails straight across with a toe clipper.
  - File sharp edges with an emery board.
  - Cutting into the corners can cause ingrown toenails.
- Use a pumice stone to reduce calluses.
- Check shoe size to ensure proper-fitting shoes in a growing child.
- Replace shoes if they are causing calluses, blisters or pain.
- Replace worn shoes.
- Have your child wear socks with shoes to reduce sweating and blisters.
- If your child has dry areas on his feet, apply lotion daily.
- Take your child to his primary care provider or podiatrist if he has:
  - pain, swelling or drainage around the toe nail
  - dry, red, itchy rash on his feet
  - plantar warts
- Call your diabetes health care provider:
  - If your child complains of tingling in his feet. This is described as “pins and needles.”
  - Before using over the counter medicines for warts, corns, etc.
What do I do if my child asks for a pedicure?

The American Diabetes Association does not recommend pedicures. They can cause an increased risk of infection for people with diabetes.

Many pre-teens and teens want pedicures. This is a decision for you as a parent. Be aware of the risks involved.

Say **NO to a pedicure if:**

- Your child has an infection or an open cut. Bug bites, bruises, scratches, scabs or poison ivy increase the risk for developing bacterial or fungal infections.
- Your child’s blood sugar is not in good control. High blood sugars increase the risk of infection and poor healing. If your child has neuropathy or loss of feeling in the feet, there is increased risk of harm if the bath water is too hot. This can further injure the feet.

**Use good judgment and choose a nail salon carefully.**

- Check out salons and ask about their cleaning practices. Ask to see the cleaning solutions. The solutions should say that they are EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) registered hospital disinfectants. Look for words like “hospital”, “health care” or “medical.”

**Inspect the foot tub:**

- Ask if cleaned between each client with hospital grade disinfectant.

**Inspect the tools:**

- Stainless steel tools are more sanitary than wooden sticks.

**Do not be afraid to give the nail technician instructions.**

- Let them know your child has diabetes.
- Use a water temperature of 90-95 degrees.
- Do not use razors.
- Do not use lotions between the toes.
- Be gentle.

**Your child should not shave legs, use removal creams or wax legs** for 2 days before the appointment. This practice decreases the chance of bacteria entering nicks or cuts on the skin.